

REMARKS

To summarize, Claims 1 and 4 have been amended and Claims 6-18 have been added.

In the Office Action, Claims 1-5 stand rejected under 35 USC §103 as being unpatentable over Hong, U.S. Pat. No. 6 550 730.

Hong discloses an enclosing sleeve 31 having a cambered groove 312 that encloses a buckle sleeve 32 having a cambered sheet 322 and a flange 321. The flange 321 is received in the cambered groove 312. As shown in Figure 4, the cambered sheet 322A deforms so that there is a resistance of the cambered sheet against the surface of a post 1 and the enclosing sleeve 31. Thus in Hong, the post 1 comprises a circular elongate element and the retaining device formed by the enclosing sleeve 31 and the buckle sleeve 32 merely provides a radially resistive contact about the entire smooth outer surface of the post.

Applicants' invention is directed to a synthetic resin component having an open end for receiving an elongate rod therein. The synthetic resin component 3 includes an insertion part 4 with a rod position regulating part 10 at a closed end thereof. Further, the resin component 3 includes a stopper piece 7 projecting obliquely (inwardly and rearwardly toward the rod position regulating part 10) as illustrated in Applicants' Figures 2 and 4.

Applicants' rod has a stopper recess formed in a side thereof. As shown in Figures 2 and 4, the rod has flat sides thereon. The stopper recess receives the stopper piece of the resin component to form the fixed structure.

Applicants' Claim 1 recites, among other features, "a stopper piece protruding obliquely to the rear side of the containing region is provided within the containing region". Claim 1 further recites a stopper recess "formed on a side surface of a forward end of the rod". There is no disclosure or suggestion in Hong of providing a stopper recess formed in

a rod. Instead, the post of Hong appears to be a rounded element along the entire length thereof.

Further, Applicants' Claim 1 recites "a position regulating part that regulates a position of the forward end of the rod" that is provided "in a rear part of the containing region, on which a forward end of the rod is abutted". In Hong, the forward end of the post does not abut any elements. As illustrated in Figure 7 of Hong, the post extends through the buckles and has a knob shape at a forward end thereof. The buckles of Hong are simply spaced along the length of the post. Therefore the structure of Hong does not provide any element that may be considered a position regulating part on which a forward end of a rod is abutted.

Applicants' Claim 2 recites that the position regulating part comprises a pressing member that is "a compression elastic body formed integrally with the synthetic resin component". As discussed above, Hong does not disclose a position regulating part that abuts a forward end of the rod. Instead, in Hong the rod is gripped radially about the post.

Applicants' Claim 4 recites that "a protrusion is provided on the side surface of the forward end of the rod" and "a fitting groove into which the protrusion is fitted is provided in an inner side surface of the inlet-side region of the insertion part of the synthetic resin component". As discussed above, Hong provides a smooth elongate rounded post without a protrusion or the like provided therewith, much less an insertion part having a matching fitting groove.

Applicants' Claim 5 recites that "a flat surface is formed on an opposite side to the stopper recess on the side surface of the forward end of the rod". As discussed above, the post disclosed in Hong has a circular cross section and does not include a recess, much less a flat surface on an opposite side from the recess.

For the reasons set forth above, Claims 1-5 are believed allowable over Hong.

Added Claims 6-13 are believed to further distinguish the prior art. Claim 6 recites a component having an insertion part and "a containing region at a closed rear end". Hong does not disclose or suggest a closed rear end. Instead, Hong discloses a post that extends through and beyond the buckle.

Applicants' Claim 6 further recites the insertion part including "a stopper piece protruding obliquely from an inner surface of the rear side of the insertion part in the containing region toward the closed rear end". This feature is not believed present in Hong.

Claim 6 further recites the rod "having a stopper recess formed at a side surface at a forward end thereof". As discussed above, the post of Hong does not have any recesses formed at a side surface, but merely comprises a hollow pipe or post having a round circular cross section.

Finally, Claim 6 recites "the stopper recess of the rod receiving the stopper piece of the component to prevent longitudinal movement of the rod relative to the synthetic resin component". Hong relies on a gripping type of force applied about the entirety of the post to provide a grasping support thereon. There is no disclosure or suggestion of a stopper recess in the post, much less for receiving a stopper piece of a synthetic resin component to prevent longitudinal movement of the rod relative to the synthetic resin component.

Dependent Claims 7-13 are believed allowable for the reasons discussed above with respect to Claim 6 and include additional features that are believed to distinguish Hong.

Further, Claim 10 recites "the rod comprising a flat surface along a length of the side surface opposite to the side surface including the stopper recess". As discussed above, Hong does not suggest that the post includes a flat surface.

Claim 11 recites an "inclined surface at a tip of the forward end" of the rod. This feature is not believed present in Hong.

Independent Claim 14 recites a fixing structure including a stopper piece and a rod having a stopper recess for receiving the stopper piece. These features are not believed present in the applied prior art.

Claims 15-18 are believed allowable for the reasons set forth with respect to parent Claim 14. Further, Claim 16 recites "the stopper recess having a flat abutment surface". As discussed above, Hong does not disclose a recess, much less an abutment surface.

In view of the above, the instant application is believed to be in condition for allowance, and action toward that end is respectfully requested.

Respectfully submitted,



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